









Commons a short time back; but there is quite enough in a general survey of the facts to give support to the remark of MAY, that "political morality may be elevated by extended liberties; but bribery has everywhere seen the vice of growing wealth."

Under the English electoral system, the election agents are obliged to send in returns of candidates' legitimate expenses; and it is from these that the Parliamentary paper referred to has been made up. Taking a few of the electorates at random, we find such sums set down as these: £23,000, £21,000, £10,000, £11,000, £25,000—these being English county electorates. In one Scotch county the expenses of the candidates, respectively, amounted to £3 10s. 8d., and £5 10s. 7d. per vote. An English borough, with 42,282 voters on the register, cost the two candidates £50,000. The expenses for Birmingham were £12,000. At Lambeth, £18,000 was spent. But it is to be remembered that these sums represent what are termed legitimate expenses, and the law does not compel the agents to disclose their whole expenditure. When elections are disputed and there is an inquiry, heavy discrepancies between the two appear. One case is mentioned where the reported expenses were £3000, and the actual amount exceeded £5000; and in many cases, if the estimate of the *Times* be correct, the true amount is to be ascertained by adding 30 or 40 per cent., or even more, to the statutory returns. As these profess to declare the legitimate expenditure, it is not unfair to consider the undisclosed surplus as illegitimate. But it is hard to believe that this sum is strictly to be applied to the surplus only.

In this colony we have no means of procuring even the imperfect and comparatively untrustworthy information which returns of this sort furnish; but there is no reason to believe that even where the most lavish expenditure occurs, the amount approaches actually or relatively the outlay in the United Kingdom. Occasionally there are rumours of heavy costs being incurred by wealthy candidates, and contumacious evidence lies within the observation of the public. But these are rare cases; and probably in the great majority, the expenses to which candidates put themselves are of trifling amount. Even the losses which unsuccessful candidates suffer when they forfeit their deposits, is slight as compared with the loss by direct expenditure incurred in the mother country by some who have a thoroughly misconceived their position. One candidate who polled nine votes is said to have spent at the rate of £300 for each of them; and in other cases the costs have represented 20 to 24 a vote. The provisions in our law relating to the deposit and its forfeiture have been objected to on the ground that they constitute a property qualification. This is true in the same sense that to require a deposit of sixpence would establish a proper qualification. The practical effect of the previous is to put some slight check upon carelessness and trifling.

But the practice in the United Kingdom really does establish a very heavy property qualification, and limits the choice of the electors to a class of men who have considerable amounts of cash at command.

It may be doubted whether the term "legitimate expenses" is rightly applied to any of these cases of heavy outlay. There must be something rotten at the foundation where money flows so freely. The relations between candidates and constituents are not healthy, where anything more is required than that the candidate should make himself and his views known, and that the electors should go to the poll and exercise their privilege. Under a sound system the State would bear the cost of the electoral machinery, the candidates would bear the cost of holding and addressing meetings of electors, and the electors would take the trouble and bear the cost of conveying themselves to the polling place. When a different apportionment of expenditure is required to carry an election through, there is cause for suspecting the want of political education or of public spirit, and the presence and operation of disturbing influences which lessen where they do not destroy the value of the election as an expression of public opinion.

Although the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION may not be an enthusiastic admirer of art, he is no shrewd man of the world not to recognise the fact that there is a very large section of the community for whom art studies have strong attractions; and Sir JOHN ROMERIUS will no doubt readily concede that in promoting art among the people the Government will be encouraging the development of a healthy taste. This colony, contrasted with its neighbours, is singularly deficient in facilities for art studies; but Sir JOHN ROMERIUS now has it in his power to remedy that deficiency to a very large extent. Prompt action is specially required in the establishment of a public art gallery, the fine collection of works, &c., belonging to the Government for the new gallery. That this is the present there have been no classes, although there is greater facility in the colony for the presentation of art studies. The trustees of the Art Gallery, recognising the importance of continuing the instruction in art, have up a series of regulations somewhat similar to those which have been in operation, with very successful results, in Melbourne. Under those regulations it is proposed, among other things, to have two classes, and a master for each branch of study. The masters will receive fixed salaries, to be supplemented by small fees payable by the students. These regulations have been in the hands of the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION for some weeks, awaiting his approval. It is understood that so far as the scheme itself is concerned the Minister has no substantial alterations to make, but his difficulty lies in the side issues involved in the adoption of that scheme. Appointments will have to be made, salaries provided, and new responsibilities incurred; but there is every reason to believe that these difficult matters will shortly be disposed of, and that the regulations will be invested with due legal force within the next fortnight. Prompt action is very desirable. The studies of those who are members of the classes connected with the old Academy are practically suspended, and numbers who have intimated their intention of becoming students are precluded from doing so, and thus our national art institute is rendered inoperative in one direction in which it should be of very great advantage. We have an excellent collection of well-arranged pictures, a most useful collection of casts, and suitable rooms for instruction purposes. As soon as the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION shall have given the necessary sanction to the carefully drafted regulations submitted by the

trustees, these advantages will be rendered available to art students.

The German merchants seem determined to follow up the good impression created in Australia by their exhibits at Sydney and Melbourne. They propose to establish a line of steamers to trade with these colonies direct, without subsidy, although petitioning the Government to aid their first efforts. The German Chamber has presented a series of popular lectures on "The Great Pyramid," "The Holy Land," and "The Holy Land," in a very exhaustive and entertaining manner, and was frequently applauded by a large and appreciative audience. The chair was occupied by the Rev. George Grimm, who introduced Mr. Colby, and took occasion to intimate that the lectures would be continued or modified "or otherwise maintain interest at fortnightly intervals." On the subject of Mr. Daniel McAlpine, excused by Mr. John Cobb, a brother of whom was a cord to the lecturer.

A very interesting and instructive lecture on the Great Pyramid was given in the Congregational schoolroom, Balmain West, by the Rev. Robert Colby, on "The Great Pyramid." The lecture dealt with his subject in a very exhaustive and entertaining manner, and was frequently applauded by a large and appreciative audience. The chair was occupied by the Rev. George Grimm, who introduced Mr. Colby, and took occasion to intimate that the lectures would be continued or modified "or otherwise maintain interest at fortnightly intervals." On the subject of Mr. Daniel McAlpine, excused by Mr. John Cobb, a brother of whom was a cord to the lecturer.

The lecture showed extensive reading and research, and was presented in a most forcible form. It was based upon the fascinating theory propounded by Phizzi Smyth, and embraced much interesting collateral information; but the lecturer, in explicit terms, disclaims committing himself to this theory. Vocal music was rendered at intervals during the evening by members of the congregation. The usual vote of thanks brought a pleasant evening to a close.

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